

# Burlington Minor Football

# Safe Management Policy



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## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Parents, Coaches, Team Personnel, Officials.....	4
1.2 Your Feedback is Important .....	4
1.3 It Does Happen.....	4
1.4 It Does Happen Here.....	4
<b>2. Behaviours and Actions – Trying to Prevent and Eliminate .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. BMFA Is Not Trying to “Prohibit Physical Contact” .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4. How We Intend to Eliminate Harassment and Abuse.....</b>	<b>6</b>
4.1 Risk Management Being Implemented .....	7
4.2 Codes of Conduct .....	7
4.3 Disciplinary Processes .....	7
4.4 Disciplinary Process / Players, Coaches, Assistants, Managers, Trainers, Officials .....	7
4.5 Disciplinary Process for Parents .....	8
4.6 Complaints / Concern, Parents / Player .....	8
4.7 Allegations / Disclosures of Harassment / Abuse .....	9
4.8 Screening Coaches, Team Personnel, Other Team Personnel and Officials .....	10
<b>5. Rules and Guidelines .....</b>	<b>11</b>
5.1 Locked Dressing Room .....	11
5.2 Leader Not Alone with Single Child.....	11
5.3 “Two-Deep Rule”.....	11
5.4 Dressing Room .....	11
5.5 Transportation of Players.....	11
5.6 Parents Pick-Up – Players After Activities.....	12
5.7 Team Meetings .....	12
5.8 BMFA Representation at Games.....	12
<b>6. Ground Rules for Touch or Not.....</b>	<b>12</b>
6.1 Judgment Call, Even When It’s Difficult .....	12
<b>7. BMFA Codes of Conduct .....</b>	<b>13</b>
7.1 Code of Conduct for BMFA Directors .....	13
7.2 Code of Conduct for the Organization .....	13
7.3 Code of Conduct for Players .....	13
7.4 Code of Conduct for Parents / Spectators .....	13
7.5 Code of Conduct for Coaches and Team Personnel.....	14
7.6 Code of Conduct for Officials .....	15

**8. BMFA Privacy Policy ..... 16**

## 1. Introduction

BMFA Safe Management Policy - to help create a safer organization in which people respect one another with fun and enjoyment for the sport. This Policy outlines safety measures that BMFA has put in place.

To reduce the risks of verbal, psychological, emotional, physical, or sexual harassment or abuse in BMFA activities; and to create measures that will allow BMFA to move quickly and decisively if harassment or abuse happens.

### 1.1 Parents, Coaches, Team Personnel, Officials

BMFA's goal is to eliminate all forms of harassment and abuse, including physical and sexual abuse. However, BMFA recognizes that verbal and emotional harassment and abuse are more common than physical and sexual harassment and abuse, and BMFA will enforce zero tolerance. BMFA's first priority is to protect its players and at the same time, Coaches, Parents, and Officials can also be the targets of harassment and abuse.

THEREFORE, every individual who participates in BMFA activities, including the parents, guardians, or caregivers of players, will be expected to learn, know, and abide by the rules, guidelines, and Codes of Conduct being introduced. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, including potential expulsion.

### 1.2 Your Feedback is Important

BMFA is proactive in their effort to actively and aggressively respond to the problems of harassment and abuse. All measures being taken will be reviewed throughout the year and at the end of each season so that they can be improved for the next year. Your feedback is vital to this process. Let us know what you think: mail or e-mail comments at any time, or talk to the Directors.

### 1.3 It Does Happen

BMFA is not overreacting to the dangers of harassment and abuse? Following the introduction of anti-harassment and abuse efforts, reports were made about incidents such as hazing rituals, underage drinking encouraged by team officials, verbal and emotional abuse following bad plays, racial discrimination, abusive physical punishment, and sexual harassment and abuse.



### 1.4 It Does Happen Here

No allegations of sexual misconduct have ever been made in BMFA and we intend to keep it that way. Likewise, the majority of BMFA activities are incident-free; however, in the past there have been situations where parents and other spectators verbally abused Officials and team personnel.

## 2. Behaviours and Actions – Trying to Prevent and Eliminate

Following are the definition guides to our anti-harassment and abuse efforts.

Respect all participants, striving to be a responsible (Coach, Assistant) and Abuse: Maltreatment or lack of care that causes harm to another:

**Harassment:** Comments, conduct, or gestures that are insulting, intimidating, humiliating, malicious, degrading, offensive, or discriminatory, directed toward an individual or group of individuals. Unwanted, unsolicited, unwelcome attention or actions, which annoy another person. Harassment can include: condescending, patronizing, threatening or punishing actions, which undermine self-esteem; jokes which cause awkwardness or embarrassment, or which may endanger a person's safety.

**Hazing:** Unwanted physical contact; discriminatory conduct; retaliation for having raised a concern, filed a complaint, etc.

**Assault:** An assault is the intentional application of force by one person against another, without the consent of that person.

**Sexual Assault:** An assault committed in circumstances of a sexual nature such that the sexual integrity of the victim is violated.

**Child Abuse:** Any form of physical, emotional and/or sexual mistreatment or lack of care, which causes physical injury or emotional damage to a child. A common characteristic of all forms of abuse against children and youth is an abuse of power or authority and/or breach of trust.

**Neglect:** Chronic inattention to the basic necessities of life, such as food, shelter, and clothing. In BMFA's context, neglect could mean inattention to or ignoring of safety issues (such as not observing the water bottle rule).

**Sexual Harassment:** Acts of sexual harassment are unwanted, uninvited remarks, gestures, sounds, or actions of a sexual nature that make someone feel unsafe, degraded or uncomfortable, creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive sport/recreation environment. Examples include: unwanted or unwelcome physical contact like touching, grabbing, or patting linking skills with gender, body shape or size, or sexual orientation: rude jokes or suggestive remarks of a sexual nature, demeaning nicknames, catcalls, rating, or embarrassing whistles, writing names on washroom or change room walls, insults about sexual orientation, insulting remarks about race, gender, class, or ability, stalking, unwanted physical contact or sexual flirtation or advances.

**Verbal Abuse:** Screaming, yelling, name-calling, especially when repeated or consistent.

**Emotional Abuse:** Attacks, especially prolonged or chronic, on an individual's self-esteem. This is psychologically destructive behaviour, especially when it is exhibited by a person in a position of power, authority, or trust. This takes many forms, including but not limited to, name-calling, threatening, ridiculing, berating, intimidating, isolating, hazing, ignoring someone's needs, or discriminating against that person.

**Physical Abuse:** Takes place when a person in a position of power or trust purposely injures or threatens to physically harm someone; can include slapping, hitting, shaking, kicking, pulling hair or ears, throwing, shoving, grabbing, hazing, or requiring excessive exercise as a form of punishment. When such things are done by one adult to another, they are usually termed assault.

**Sexual Abuse:** "The misuse of power by someone who is in authority over a child, for the purposes of exploiting a child for sexual gratification." Sexual abuse can be of two kinds, contact or non-contact, and includes incest, sexual molestation, sexual assault and the exploitation of the child for pornography or prostitution, forcing a child to watch someone else remove clothing or perform sexual acts, fondling or touching a child in private places, forcing a child to take part in sexual activities.

### 3. **BMFA Is Not Trying to "Prohibit Physical Contact"**

Sexual harassment is NOT:

- A hug between friends.
- Mutual flirtation.
- Sincere and personal compliments.
- Spontaneous gestures of affection.

However, Coaches and other team personnel will be meeting with parents and players about this issue in order to establish ground rules for their teams. If an individual is uncomfortable with these rules, it is up to him or her or his or her parents or guardians to discuss it with the Coach.

### 4. **How We Intend to Eliminate Harassment and Abuse**

Rather than creating a large number of hard and fast rules and regulations, our risk management measures focus on people taking responsibility and being held accountable for their actions; exercising discretion and judgment in trying to prevent harassment and abuse - whoever the harasser/abuser is and whoever the target is.

## 4.1 Risk Management Being Implemented

The major risk management measures being implemented are outlined below.

## 4.2 Codes of Conduct

BMFA Board has approved Codes of Conduct. Codes of Conduct establishes standards for behaviour and action that all participants will be expected to meet. This will be enforced, and behaviour and action contrary to them may lead to disciplinary measures and possibly expulsion. All participants are responsible for learning and abiding by them.

## 4.3 Disciplinary Processes

The following disciplinary processes will be used to deal with breaches of the Code of Conduct or the Bylaws. Players, Team Personnel, Officials and Parents are subject to a disciplinary process that conforms to BMFA regulations.

NOTE: All games are reviewed each week by the designated BMFA Official. Incidents warranting review are flagged for follow-up by the appropriate Convenor and the Director of House League. A single incident will usually not result in a disciplinary hearing, unless it is required by the Organizations guidelines, or unless violence or abuse are alleged. All complaints MUST be put in writing.

## 4.4 Disciplinary Process / Players, Coaches, Assistants, Managers, Trainers, Officials

1. Complaints, penalties, suspensions, or breaches of the Code of Conduct may result first in a warning letter being sent to the individual.
2. Where BMFA regulations require it, and if the breach of the Code is not remedied or is serious enough, an individual may be called to a disciplinary hearing. A panel is set up. The President will select three (3) Board Members and one outside party if he/she so wishes. The panel will be convened within the appropriate time frames determined by the Board of Directors.
3. The panel will hear evidence related to the matter, including speaking to the individual him or herself, and to other individuals who have knowledge of the incident(s). If a player under the age of 14 is the subject of the hearing, he or she will be accompanied by a parent.
4. The panel will make a decision on the matter, using guidelines as applicable in their best judgment.
5. A letter outlining the result and consequences is then sent to the individual, Convenor and the Director of House League.
6. A copy is kept on file for future reference.



### 4.5 Disciplinary Process for Parents

If the behaviour of a Parent causes concern, the Coaches, Parent Reps, and Convenors must use common sense and good judgment. The process set out below would be used in most circumstances; however, if a parent's behaviour is reckless, violent, or otherwise immediately threatening, then action should be taken right away to have the individual removed from the field, and the matter should be referred immediately to the Board of Directors of BMFA.

1. Parents will be introduced to the Codes of Conduct through the team meetings, and educational opportunities. The Coach and Parent Rep are responsible for monitoring the behaviour of parents on their team.
2. If a parent breaches the Code of Conduct, the Parent Rep and Coach will speak with the parent, explain the problem behaviour, refer him or her to the Code, offer another copy of it, and warn him or her verbally. The Coach will keep a record of the incident and action taken on an Occurrence Report Form, and will send a copy to the BMFA office.
3. If the parent continues to breach the Code, the Coach and Parent Rep will involve the Convenor. The Convenor will speak to the parent, review the Code again, and issue a written warning.
4. If the parent persists in his or her behaviour, the Coach and Parent Rep may ask the Convenor to take the issue to the Director of House League and the Board. If a report is made to the Board of Directors of BMFA concerning a violation of BMFA's Harassment and Abuse Policy, the Board of Directors, in their sole discretion, shall take whatever action they deem appropriate as a result of such report, which action may include a ban from fields used by BMFA for a specific period of time.
5. If the individual ignores this ban and shows up at a BMFA event, the Convenor or designated BMFA official will ask the person to leave. If he or she refuses, the police will be called and the individual(s) will be charged with trespassing.

### 4.6 Complaints / Concern, Parents / Player

A process has been created to provide parents and players with a specific process they can use to raise concerns and complaints. It is important that people become familiar with the definitions of harassment and abuse that BMFA has adopted as complaints and allegations of this type can be very serious matters, and must not be made lightly or maliciously. If they can be, issues should be resolved at the team level. Therefore, individuals should follow the process and not send complaints to the Board, unless the situation involves allegations of abuse or serious harassment. In such cases, the individual should contact the Convenor, or Board member. The complaint will have to be put in writing.

### Resolving Complaints or Concerns:

1. Take concerns or complaints to the Coach. Discuss the situation with him and try to find a solution. The Coach will keep a record of the discussion on an Occurrence Report Form.
2. If the issue cannot be resolved through the first step, the Parent Rep should become involved, and he/she, the complainant, and the Coach should try to resolve the issue. The Coach and Parent Rep should keep a record of the discussion and attempts at resolution. The Coach will send a copy of the information to BMFA Board of Director.
3. If the matter is still not resolved, the complainant will be asked to discuss the matter with the Division Convenor. The Convenor will ask that the complaint be put in writing if the individual wants the issue taken further and may assist the person to do this.
4. If the Convenor cannot resolve it, the issue will be raised, in writing, with the Director of House League, who will attempt to resolve it.
5. If the matter is still unresolved, the Director of House League will take it to the Board, which will make a final, binding decision.

### **4.7 Allegations / Disclosures of Harassment / Abuse**

Wherever possible, BMFA will deal with breaches of the Codes of Conduct through internal mechanisms. However, if an individual's actions or behaviour constitute an imminent or immediate threat, the organization must and will involve outside authorities, including the police.

In addition, if and when a child or youth alleges, reports, or discloses abuse, or if abuse or neglect is suspected, the individual who learns of it and the organization are morally and legally bound to report the matter to the authorities. The process that will be followed in both cases is set out below:

1. If a child discloses or makes an allegation of abuse, he or she should be comforted, assured of protection and care, and reassured that he or she can continue to play. The individual who receives the disclosure will ask for basic information, but will not attempt to interview the child.
2. The matter will be reported to the Halton Children's Aid Society and to the Halton Regional Police Service. Authorities will be asked if or how the organization should notify anyone (e.g. the child's parents) of the situation.
3. BMFA will not notify the individual against whom the allegation has been made or the suspicion brought. However, once the police have done so, the individual will be suspended from involvement in BMFA activities until the situation is

resolved. This may not seem fair; however, the organization's first responsibility is to protect children.

4. BMFA will make decisions immediately about communication regarding the incident; the President will act as spokesperson. BMFA will weigh the need to protect children against the need to maintain confidentiality as far as possible. People may be talking about the situation; nevertheless, the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* establishes that a person charged with an offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty, and the organization must be careful not to defame any individual.
5. BMFA will assist the child protection investigation, but WILL NOT conduct a parallel internal investigation.
6. BMFA will decide on appropriate action regarding an individual's involvement with BMFA only following the completion of the official investigation and any judicial process that follows (e.g., a hearing, a trial). The organization may suspend anyone charged with a provincial or federal offence, pending the disposition of the charge, if the offence is essentially related to the position the individual holds. If convicted of an offence, individuals may be dismissed by BMFA if the offence is essentially related to the position and if there are reasonable grounds to believe he or she poses a significant risk to children or others.
7. Following such an incident, BMFA will take action to help the organization and its members heal. BMFA will look to the Halton Centre for Childhood Sexual Abuse in particular to assist members in their efforts to deal with the situation. BMFA commits itself to supporting the individual(s) who act on suspicions, allegations, disclosures, or reports, recognizing how difficult these matters are.
8. If an incident occurs, BMFA will undertake an immediate review of its risk assessment efforts and revise them as necessary and will redouble awareness-building and education efforts on harassment and abuse.

#### **4.8 Screening Coaches, Team Personnel, Other Team Personnel and Officials**

BMFA has implemented a pre-screening process for Coaches and Team Officials. Currently, pre-screening processes for Coaches and Team Officials include the following:

- Application submitted (Head Coach).
- An interview with BMFA Board or designated individual(s) (Head Coach).
- Recommendation to the Board by designated individual(s) (Head Coach)
- NCCP – Level One Certification.

- Recommendation by designated individual(s) based on Head Coaches selection for Managers and Team Officials.
- Board Approval.
- A police record check (every 2 years).

### 5. Rules and Guidelines

BMFA's risk management measures are primarily focused on standards set out in the Codes of Conduct, and on encouraging people to use common sense, discretion, and good judgment in preventing or eliminating harassment and abuse. Following are ten (10) specific rules/guidelines, which will be monitored during the season to ensure compliance.

#### 5.1 Locked Dressing Room

Doors to locker and dressing rooms must be kept unlocked at all times (except when the team is on the field and the door is locked for security reasons).

#### 5.2 Leader Not Alone with Single Child

No youth or adult leader should be in a room alone with a single child at any time. This applies to house league and rep games, practices, tournaments, etc.

#### 5.3 "Two-Deep Rule"

As far as possible, there should always be at least two youth or adult leaders in the room with a group of players. Similarly, two adults or more (number dependent on the number of players) should accompany any group of players when they travel.

#### 5.4 Dressing Room

The following guidelines will govern who should be in the dressing rooms before and after games.

At the discretion of the Coach, team personnel (including the Coach, Parent Rep, Assistant Coach, Manager, and Trainer) may meet privately with the players for a brief period. At that time, all other people must leave the room. The door may be closed, but not locked. After the game, again at the discretion of the Coach, Team Personnel may meet briefly in private with the players. All other people must leave the room. The door may be closed, but not locked. Coaches will not be expected to help dress any player.

#### 5.5 Transportation of Players

Regarding transportation of players, parents are reminded that it is their responsibility to provide transportation for their children to and from BMFA activities. In exceptional circumstances, Coaches may drive children other than their

own, but they will not drive alone with a child who is not their own. Parents and Coaches who drive other children should check with their insurance companies to make sure they are covered while doing so. Members are reminded that children under 12 should not be placed in the front seat if there is a passenger side airbag.

### **5.6 Parents Pick-Up – Players After Activities**

Parents must be on time to pick up their children after BMFA activities. When they are not, BMFA representatives, usually Coaches are placed in a very awkward position and saddled with an unfair burden of responsibility. BMFA may take action if a parent is consistently late.

### **5.7 Team Meetings**

All teams will have at least one meeting during the season. All parents, players (as appropriate), and Team Personnel are to be invited by the Coach.

The meeting should be held within the first two-three weeks of the start of the season. At that time, this Handbook will be distributed to all families, and Coaches will review it with parents and players.

### **5.8 BMFA Representation at Games**

It is impossible to guarantee that a BMFA rep will be able to go to absolutely every game. However, BMFA will make every reasonable effort to have an Official representative, likely a Convenor or Parent Rep, at every game, in case there are difficulties which require his or her intervention.



## **6. Ground Rules for Touch or Not**

BMFA's intention is to prevent and eliminate harassment and abuse, not to forbid people from touching each other (e.g. Coaches patting players, etc.), nor to make people paranoid about their every move. At the same time, this is a very sensitive topic, and Team Personnel, Parents, and Players (where age-appropriate) are encouraged to talk to one another about this issue and to set ground rules that people feel comfortable with.

### **6.1 Judgment Call, Even When It's Difficult**

Safety of all who participate in BMFA activities especially, children and youth, is BMFA's prime concern. Parents, Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Managers, Trainers, Convenors, Board Members, and Officials are required and expected to take action in the face of breaches of the Codes of Conduct. In addition, all adults are required by law to report to the authorities if they "have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection". That legal obligation cannot be delegated to another person.

## 7. BMFA Codes of Conduct

### 7.1 Code of Conduct for BMFA Directors

BMFA Directors will adhere to all areas of the Code of Conduct in the Safe Management Policy.

### 7.2 Code of Conduct for the Organization

The BMFA Board and its designates will:

- Do our best to see that all children are given the same chance to participate, regardless of gender, ability, ethnic background, or race.
- Discourage any sport program from becoming primarily an entertainment for spectators.
- Make sure that all prudent and reasonable, appropriate and necessary measures are taken on an ongoing basis to protect the safety of all members wherever BMFA activities take place, in those programs, and at the hands of BMFA members or others.
- Make sure that age and maturity level of children are considered in program development, rule enforcement, and scheduling.
- Remember that play is done for its own sake and make sure that winning is kept in proper perspective.
- Appropriately and thoroughly screen all those who provide service on behalf of the organization, both before, but especially after they are involved, seeking to have Coaches and Officials who are capable of promoting fair play as well as the development of good technical skills.
- Distribute, publicize, promote, and enforce the Codes of Conduct within this organization.

### 7.3 Code of Conduct for Players

All players and parents must sign the player agreement form.

### 7.4 Code of Conduct for Parents / Spectators

As the parent of a player, or as a spectator, I will:

- Enroll my child for the pure enjoyment of the game and the opportunity to learn the skills of the sport.
- Recognize that at a football field, my child's development is in the hands of volunteers who are giving their time and energy for the sake of all participants.
- Respect the decisions of the Coaches, whether at practice, special events, or during a game.

- Conduct myself in an adult manner by attending games, practices, special events, and by being positive and encouraging to all players at all times.
- Encourage my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility, profanity, verbal or physical violence.
- Never verbally abuse a Coach, Assistant, Manager, Trainer, or Official. I will remember that they have difficult jobs and will not undermine them by contradicting, interfering, or questioning their character, motivation, or judgment in public.
- I will not engage in or encourage gossip. I will take concerns to the proper BMFA officials.
- Accept that I remain responsible, as a parent, for the safety of my child while he/she is participating in BMFA activities. I will therefore do my part to protect and enhance the safety of my child and others.
- Understand and accept that violation of this Code may result in disciplinary action of some kind.

### 7.5 Code of Conduct for Coaches and Team Personnel

I understand that as a Coach (or Assistant, Manager, Trainer, Team Parent, etc.), I am in a position of trust and authority. I will:

- Be reasonable when scheduling games and practices, remembering that players have other interests and obligations.
- Teach my players to play fairly and to respect the rules, Officials, and their opponents.
- Remember that players play to have fun and must be encouraged to have confidence in themselves.
- Remember that participants need a Coach they can respect. I will be generous with praise and set a good example; etc.. I recognize that I am in a position of trust and power, and I will do nothing to take advantage of or abuse it.
- I will do my best to be a competent Coach, well prepared and adequately skilled. I will obtain proper training and will attempt to upgrade and improve my skills.
- Fulfill my obligations and responsibilities toward the team and the Association, as established by BMFA, to the best of my abilities.
- Direct comments at an individual's performance and not at the individual.
- Not ridicule or yell at players for making mistakes or for performing poorly.

- Take reasonable steps to see that equipment and facilities are safe and appropriate to my players.
- Cooperate with Officials and refrain from public criticism of them or of other Coaches. I will put my concerns in writing and will send them to the proper individual.
- Learn the definitions and signs of harassment and abuse, and the process for responding to allegations or disclosures, and comply with BMFA's safety guidelines, working to prevent physical, emotional/verbal, and sexual harassment and abuse.
- Communicate with my players and with their parents, regularly throughout the season, so that everyone is clear about the rules and expectations, and so that we have a shared goal for the season.
- Emphasize the importance of the Players' and Parents' Codes, and hold my team members and their parents accountable for compliance.
- Recognize and accept that violations of the Codes of Conduct may result in disciplinary measures being taken against me.

### 7.6 Code of Conduct for Officials

As a BMFA Official, I will:

- Recognize that my position is one of a teacher and role model for fair play, especially where young children are concerned. I will strive to honour that role and not to abuse my position in any way.
- Strive to see that every player has a reasonable opportunity to perform to the best of his or her ability, within the limits of the rules.
- Work in cooperation with Coaches for the benefit of the game, and will be open to discussion, constructive criticism, and will respect and consider different points of view.
- Take all reasonable measures to avoid or put an end to any situation that threatens the safety of players, team, team Officials, or spectators.
- Seek to maintain a healthy atmosphere and environment for competition.
- Not permit players to be intimidated by word or action. I will not tolerate unacceptable conduct toward myself, other Officials, players, team personnel, or spectators.
- Strive to be consistent and objective in making my calls, regardless of the personal feelings I may have toward a player or team.
- Strive to handle all conflicts firmly and with dignity.

- Obtain proper training and continually upgrade my officiating skills.



### 8. **BMFA Privacy Policy**

Your privacy is important to us. Together with the Board of Directors, Coaches, and Volunteers, Burlington Minor Football Association stands firm and committed to maintaining our membership's privacy. We undertake all reasonable measures to protect the privacy, accuracy and reliability of our membership's personal information and to protect such information from misuse, unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration, destruction and solicitation.

BMFA may request personal information from our membership such as name and e-mail address. This information is for the sole purpose of meeting BMFA requirements, opinion polls, registration etc. We do not provide this information to other organizations (except as required for registration in league or provincial bodies) or to marketing organizations.

We require our membership to maintain the confidentiality of such information and not to use it for other than BMFA purposes. Wilful breach of this confidentiality requirement will result in members being declared "not in good standing" and in the withdrawal of services.

Any misuse of membership personal information will be brought to a review Board for further action.